

A round-up of the eye-related hot topics that have been trending on social media over the last few weeks.

#BusyPhillips #photokeratitis

#sunglasses

Last time, we were in the throes of the Beast from the East. Here in the UK, it's been a long winter and cold start to spring. The days are longer now, thanks to British Summer Time, though the weather has yet to catch up! While I'm dreaming of sunnier climes, Busy Phillips warned me of the perils of too much sunshine – photokeratitis. She is an actress best known for supporting roles in *Dawson's Creek* and *Freaks and Geeks*, though more recently her claim to fame is, according to *The New Yorker*, as "the breakout star of Instagram stories" [1]. She documented her ordeal on Instagram stories so her fans could follow her in real time, complete with crying and trying to soothe her eyes with suggestions from fans, like anti-allergy medication and water soaked napkins. After "four hours in the ER" she emerged wearing oversized sunglasses and explained her symptoms were a result of too much light and sunshine exposure to her baby blues during a recent magazine photoshoot [2-3]. For us mere mortals, our sunny beach or ski holidays can cause the same corneal inflammation that is, in essence, a 'sun burn' of the eyes. Good thing *Vogue* recently released its edit of the 'Sunglasses trends to get on board with this season' [4]. Maybe skip the micro trend though for maximum eye protection.

#stemcell #moorfields

No doubt you will have heard of the latest development coming from Moorfields. "I've been given my sight back" makes for a superb headline [5]. Scientists at Moorfields reported improvement of vision in two patients with wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) following stem cell therapy. A human embryonic stem cell derived retinal pigment epithelium patch was surgically implanted in these patients as part of a phase 1 safety and feasibility study. Remarkably, the patients gained vision over 12 months (29 Early Treatment in Diabetic Retinopathy Study (ETDRS) letters in patient one and 21 ETDRS letters in patient two). One patient developed a retinal detachment, felt to be associated with proliferative vitreoretinopathy, and was successfully treated with standard surgical techniques. They did note that until a larger series of patients were examined, it was not possible to comment whether the patch itself contributed to the risk of developing proliferative vitreoretinopathy. Neither patient demonstrated evidence of neoplastic changes at 12 months, but the

authors acknowledge that this is an early point to comment on this. Both patients will be followed-up for five years following surgery. It is important to note that these effects were seen in patients with severe vision loss secondary to severe wet AMD. The authors hope that their novel therapy will be applicable also to those with early dry AMD [6,7]. While it is very early days to be commenting on whether this will be the future of treatment in retinal degenerative diseases, it does all sound extremely promising for the future. Watch this space!

#MuseumofIllusions

Here's one that's not just for the kids. Created by Californian artists, these amazing artworks are on display in Los Angeles [8]. They created optical illusions, which make for some intriguing photos. Visitors are encouraged to participate and photograph their interpretation of the illusions. Where else could you be part of the *Titanic* or knock out Donald Trump? A picture really is worth a thousand words. Check out the photos that made the Twitter Moments <https://twitter.com/i/moments/980494900293656576>. Like what you see? Better cash in those frequent flyer miles – it's only available until 30 June [9].

#EmmaO'Mahoney

Emma is a teenager suffering with cystic acne. And like most teenagers, she became self-conscious and sought medical help to resolve her acne. She was put on doxycycline but unfortunately after two years started developing non-specific seemingly unrelated symptoms – back pain (put down to a minor injury during dance lessons), then tinnitus (thought to be due to poor circulation), and then finally visual blurring [10]. It turned out she was suffering from idiopathic intracranial hypertension, and unfortunately she has suffered significant visual loss as a result of this [11]. And indeed, perusal of the BNF confirmed that idiopathic intracranial hypertension is a listed side-effect of tetracycline antibiotics [12].

But, unlike most teenagers, she's taken to social media to share her story and promote positivity around acne. "I have cystic acne, but I'm going to try to like myself anyway" is the caption on her Instagram with a make-up free selfie [13]. We all remember the awkwardness of our teenage years. Arguably, perhaps, it is more difficult for teenagers today, as sharing selfies on Instagram and Snapchat is ubiquitous. Her post goes on to share the details of her story, and ends with impressive maturity, "So I'm going to try

something new, I'm going to try liking myself and accepting [sic] my skin for what it is. Of course I'm going to continue to search for ways to treat my skin, but I'm going to stop looking in the mirror and hating myself for something I can't control" [13].

#UK #polar bear #25 years

I'll end with a happy birthday post to *Eye News*, which is 25 this issue. It's been 25 years also since this last polar bear was born in the UK. The new cub emerged from its mother's den at Scotland's Highland Wildlife Park at Kincraig [14]. If you're in need of cheering up, have a look at this video <https://twitter.com/BBC/status/977100896197840896>. It's sure to put a smile on your face!

References

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